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INTELLIGENCE NOTE

BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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MOROCCO: KING HASSAN, HIS ARMY, AND HIS FUTURE

The near-miss coup attempt of July 10 in Morocco--which resulted in a savage internecine army bloodbath--is now effectively quelled.

The full details of the military conspiracy and of what actually transpired at the tragic birthday party remain yet to be clarified, but the events of July add up to a major turning point in the reign of King Hassan. His relationship to the army has changed significantly and, although presently secure, he seems in greater eventual jeopardy than ever before from basic military and civilian discontent.

Army's Loyalty Shattered--The senior military leadership, split between rebels and loyalists, is severely decimated. Nine of the country's 16 generals are known to have been killed or executed thus far, and numerous colonels, majors, and lower-ranking officers have died. But the prime casualty was the idea that the army gave monolithic and unconditional loyalty to the monarch. King Hassan, founder and commander-in-chief of the Royal Armed Forces, had assiduously cultivated the myth and almost certainly regarded the military as indispensable. The coup attempt has cast doubt on the military establishment. While Hassan understandably has publicly maintained that the army remains "pure and honest", his top surviving military supporters,

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Generals Mohamed Oufkir and Driss ben Aomar, are leading a hunt for those in the army allied to or sympathetic toward the conspirators. Presumably, a thorough-going purge of the officer corps--which may have been much more broadly implicated in the coup affair than is presently known--will ensue. Even so, the army probably cannot be put together again as a wholly loyal instrument of royal will. The wholesale slaughter of brother officers could well set in motion deep-seated resentments and blood revenge motives within the clannish Berbers, who make up most of the senior officer corps. And the vacancies in higher ranks raise the inevitable prospect of promotion into command responsibilities for the better-educated younger generation of middle-grade officers, a group whose ultimate reliability thus far is open to question.

Growing Military Influence? While the specific grievances that triggered the army officers' revolt remain unclear, substantial military dissatisfaction on several scores has been evident over the past year. The King's decision to restore constitutional government and parliament in the summer of 1970 (after five years of emergency rule in which the military and security forces had a largely unfettered hand) was not popular in military ranks even though army officers were given a role in managing the elections. Of probably greater significance was military unhappiness over blatant corruption and

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favoritism among high civilian ministers and officials--not that all the military were immune. A corruption scandal in April sullied the regime's reputation, led the King to postpone his visit to the US, and obliged him to dismiss four ministers and other lesser officials. The military were also displeased over the King's Algerian policy which, in the eyes of nationalist army officers, appeared to amount to virtual capitulation on Morocco's long-standing border claims.

The loyalist military leaders, on whom the King is dependent to a greater degree than ever before, have an innate antipathy toward the existing political system, viewing parties as basically demagogic and civilian officials as venal and ineffective. To rally morale in the military, they will almost certainly request--and receive in the coming months--accelerated promotions and increased arms of impressive proportions. Moreover, they are likely to exploit their present bargaining position to press for a more efficient, perhaps military-led, government and for policies with popular appeal and more nationalist content. They may press the King to seek revisions in the US military presence at Kenitra if not satisfied with American responsiveness to present and likely additional requests for arms.

Hassan's Longer-Term Dilemma: Restoring a Political Balance.

To a considerable extent, King Hassan is himself responsible for his present predicament: over-reliance on his military establishment. His consummate success over 11 years of rule in progressively concentrating

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virtually all effective powers in his hands destroyed the balance of political forces on which the monarchy rested when he acceded to the throne in 1961. Political parties, trade unions, and other civilian political forces eroded into near impotence, leaving the King virtually alone with the military. By relying heavily on the security forces to repress popular discontent, Hassan contained potential trouble but deepened resentment against the regime. And by disregarding the military officers' dissatisfactions over policy and the course of domestic events, the King became increasingly vulnerable to the kind of military reaction that occurred on July 10. Even though he has mustered sufficient army support to overcome that challenge, Hassan's existing relationship with the military leaves him basically vulnerable. He may attempt to neutralize the military, seeking even more than in the past to play against one another various army units as well as the security police, gendarmerie, and auxiliary forces. But he is unlikely willingly to alter his autocratic style of rule or allow civilian political groups to develop into a significant opposing force. As a consequence, King Hassan's throne appears in greater jeopardy over the longer term than ever before.

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